

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT**

700 North 10th Street, Room 258  
Sacramento, CA 95814-0338  
(916) 341-4200  
(916) 341-4203 (FAX)  
(916) 327-6318 (TDD)

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**CONTACT:** Judy Burns

(916) 341-4234

Mark Vessels

(916) 341-4351

**Heat Hits Poor and Over-50 Californians Hardest**

Sacramento - Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) Director Lloyd Throne today urged the low-income disabled, elderly, or families with young children to plan ahead to stay safe and healthy during the hot summer months.

"Last summer's lessons were hard-learned," Throne said. "We suffered extraordinary loss of life in California during the heat wave, and we're committed to avoiding the same thing this year. Information about preventive measures that anyone can take can literally be the difference between life and death."

The Department of Health Services' Review of the July 2006 Heat Wave released last month found that ninety percent of the victims of heat-related deaths lived in socio-economically depressed areas, the majority were over the age of 50, had chronic health conditions, and/or were socially or geographically isolated.

Family members and friends of those at-risk are often the first line of defense, according to Throne, and can assist by reviewing the tips below and putting them in place when the hot weather begins:

- check with the at-risk person often and make sure person has appropriate cold beverages, cold packs of ice, or cool baths available
- if air conditioning is available, turn it on. Of heat-related deaths in 2006, only one person was reported to have been using air conditioning.
- Take an at-risk person to a cooling center, a mall, library or other air conditioned place, even for a few hours

State and local agencies offer programs that assist at-risk Californians with heat waves. The California Department of Aging and county Departments of Aging and Adult Services provide information for seniors and others at risk from the heat about "Cooling Centers" that are available in some local communities during heat emergencies. To locate a cooling center, contact either the county Department of Health, the county Department of Aging and Adult Services, or phone the Area Agencies on Aging toll-free at (800) 510-2020.

Or call the new state-wide toll free number at 1-877-435-7021 (7a.m. to 7p.m.) for heat related information, referral numbers for impacted counties, and cooling center locations. (TTY – 1-800-822-6268)

Director Throne urged the caregivers and families of frail adults, seniors or young

children to learn the warning signs of heat stroke and heat exhaustion and to contact a physician or call 911 if they suspect someone is suffering from either condition.

The attached tip sheet will help make the summer heat more bearable while at the same time keep energy costs down. For every degree the thermostat is raised, about 3 to 5 percent can be saved on air conditioning costs.

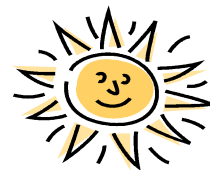
Director Throne also suggested that consumers contact their local utility companies to learn more about available programs and services that can help, such as alternative rates for energy for low-income eligible customers and free services, including weatherization and energy audits.

CSD administers the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) via local service providers. LIHEAP is a federally funded program that assists low-income households meeting federal income guidelines with their heating and cooling needs. Please contact CSD toll-free at (866) 675-6623 or log on to [www.csd.ca.gov](http://www.csd.ca.gov) to find a local service provider. Interested individuals may inquire about eligibility requirements for bill payment, energy crisis and weatherization assistance.

For more information about the location of “Cooling Centers,” see the Office of Emergency Services website at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) or [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

Or call the toll free number for information on how to protect yourself from the hot weather at **1 877-435-7021**.

## **Tips to Stay Cool This Summer**



### **Keep Cool Tips for Everyone**

- Stay in air-conditioned space at home, the library, the mall, or a Cooling Center.
- Schedule outside activities before noon or in the evening. Avoid or minimize physical exertion.
- Drink lots of water. Avoid alcohol beverages and caffeinated drinks.
- Close shades and curtains by 9:00 am, especially on windows facing south or west.
- Keep lights off or turned down.
- Take cool baths or showers.
- Wear loose, light cotton clothing.
- Do not eat heavy meals. Avoid cooking with your oven.
- Do not sit in a hot car, even for a short time. Never leave a child or pet in a car.

### **Keep Cool at Home AND Save Energy Costs**

- Install a programmable thermostat. Make sure it automatically adjusts to a higher temperature (above 78 degrees) when you are not home or sleeping.

- Set thermostat at 78 degrees or higher. You save 3-5 percent on your air conditioning cost for **each** degree you raise the thermostat.
- Replace filters often, even in the summer. Check furnace and air filters monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Keep your air conditioning duct vents clean and clear. Make sure furniture or drapes are not blocking air vents or keeping cool air from circulating freely.
- Buy an Energy Star air conditioner. It can save you up to 10% over one that doesn't have the label. Have an air-conditioning technician or energy auditor determine the right size unit for the space.
- Plant trees or shrubs to block out direct rays of sun.
- Ceiling fans help your air conditioner move cool air around the home.
- Turn off air and open your windows for a cross breeze on cooler evenings.
- Replace light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL's). CFLs use about  $\frac{1}{4}$  as much electricity and last ten times longer than incandescent bulbs.
- If you do not have air conditioning, use portable or ceiling fans. At night they help rid the house of the heat from the daytime sun and make you feel about four degrees cooler than the actual temperature. However, turn off fans when you are not in the room. The fans cool you, not the air.